

tions, are no doubt quite important, and if the railway were not directly under the control of the commission no doubt the government would be able to avail itself of the judgment and views of the commission. It is for hon. senators to express their views on the subject, and we are all free to do as we please in the matter.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—The reasons advanced by the hon. Secretary of State are, to my mind, some of the strongest reasons for adopting the amendment. The hon. gentleman says that technical questions may arise in the management of the road affecting freights and other matters, with which experts in railway matters alone could deal. It is not to be expected that the minister would be as well fitted to perform that duty as a board appointed for that purpose, and whose special duty would be to institute an inquiry into the effect of any traffic arrangements which might be necessary in order to carry out the proper exchange of freight to the different roads to which the hon. Secretary of State has called attention. Then, as has been very properly remarked by the mover of the amendment, it would relieve the government and political head of the department of responsibilities which it would be much better that they should not exercise than to keep it within their powers. When the hon. gentleman spoke upon this question before, he said the maritime province members objected to bringing this road under the management of the board. The suggestion, I think, which would be carried to the minds of every one would be that the maritime province people feared that there might be some interference with the freight rates which would be to their disadvantage. Now, if we want to relieve the country of the incubus which the Intercolonial Railway has been in the past upon the revenues of the country, the sooner it is placed upon a business basis the better for the country, the better for the road, and the better for those who live upon this line and who seek to take advantage of it. From my short experience in the Railways and Canals Department, I should look upon this as a very great boon, to be relieved of this particular part of the duties which pertain to the minister for the time being. The pressure which is brought upon the minister from political friends, more than from

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political enemies, is that which he has to fight against, and much more strongly and determinedly than the pressure from the other side. It has been well pointed out by the hon. senator from Westmoreland that it will not interfere with the power, authority and responsibility of the government. It will relieve them of that technical duty, as it has been termed by the Secretary of State, which obtains in the management of the road. It will be in the interests of the country, as well as in the interests of the department and the government themselves, if they could see their way clear to accept the amendment placing all railways under the control and management of the board. If the board is to be of any advantage to the country, it should relieve government ownership of roads from the difficulties which surround it now in the proper management of the railway, particularly in the interchange of freight and other matters. Unless there are political reasons—and which I fear very much are the reasons which have influenced the government in the course they have taken in this matter, to justify the government in the course that they will pursue in reference to government railways, I would urge them in their own interest, as well as in the interest of the public, to accept the amendment and bring all railways, whether owned by the people through the government or by private companies, under the provisions of this Bill.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN (de Lanaudière).—There seems to be a misapprehension in this matter. Does the hon. gentleman from Westmoreland mean by the amendment, that the Intercolonial Railway would be run by the Railway Commission?

Hon. Mr. WOOD—No.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN—Simply that the same rules would apply to all railways?

Hon. Mr. WOOD—Yes.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN—But the administration of the government railway would still be left with the Minister of Railways and Canals?

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—Yes, in just the same way.

Hon. Mr. WOOD—As I understand, the government railways would be in the same